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WELFARE REFORM — WHAT NEXT?
MITCHELL I. GINSBERG

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FEMININE MINISTRY & CLERICAL CULTURE
THOMAS FRANKLIN O'MEARA

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NEWS & VIEWS

Blessing Birth Control

A birth-control push by the Indonesian government has prompted the Indonesian Bishops' Conference to update its 1968 statement on *Humanae Vitae* and responsible parenthood. The result is perhaps the most forthright condoning of artificial birth control yet to come from a national hierarchy. The pertient paragraphs, as they appeared in the London *Tablet*:

"a) There are parents who are troubled because from the one side they feel the obligation to regulate births, but from the other they are not able to fulfil this obligation by temporary or absolute sexual abstinence. In these circumstances, they decide responsibly and do not need to feel that they have sinned, if they employ other methods, provided that the human dignity of wife or husband is not diminished, or provided that the means employed do not go against human life (i.e. abortion and permanent sterilization) and provided the medical responsibility is upheld.

"b) Medical personnel are directly involved in these problems of parents. They, and also Catholic medical institutions, do not perform evil if they responsibly advise and aid the request of parents who desire to avoid a new pregnancy by employing other methods than total or periodical sexual abstinence. However, they must always hold that provoked abortion and permanent sterilization for regulating birth are absolutely forbidden.

"c) The priests are asked to give adequate direction to all the faithful, particularly to parents and to medical personnel of the place who ask for information, according to the line of the above statement. Hopefully, the priest will be tolerant enough not to condemn either those who feel obliged to follow total or periodical sexual abstinence or those who feel obliged to employ other means. . . ."

Catholic White Elephants

State governments are prime prospects for what Eugene Kennedy once labeled "white - elephant" Catholic properties — the seminaries and educational institutions closing down for want of vocations, students, funds, etc. But evidently not up Massachusetts way.

State Secretary William I. Cowan recently postponed for one year a ruling on whether the state should pay out $3.5 million for the now defunct Cardinal Cushing College in Brookline. (The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health has proposed using the college as a learning center for emotionally disturbed and retarded children.)

At the same time, Secretary Cowan quashed outright a plan for the state to purchase for $4.5 million the vacant seminary of the Stigmatine Fathers in Milton.

The latter decision caused a furore, with Stigmatine Provincial Father Charles A. Sinesi accusing Cowan of "planting aspersions in the newspapers which slander a religious order existing to serve mankind."

Cowan conceded that he had questions "about the fiscal perspective, primarily about the cost of the property." But he added that he was also opposed because of location. The seminary is 15 miles outside the Boston area, and would have been bought for the Massachusetts College of Art. "An art school properly belongs in an urban setting," said Cowan.

The seminary is a 168-acre estate featuring a large baroque-style mansion, a six-classroom building, a gymnasium and two swimming pools.

Phil Frank

White House Buggers

The bugging activities of Richard Nixon, now gloriously revealed, served to recall a Lyndon Johnson bugging incident for *New Leader* columnist Andrew J. Glass. (Glass narrated the incident not so much to reflect on LBJ as to point up the differences in underlying spirit with which LBJ and RMN approached the Presidency.) Glass' story:

In 1964, Lyndon Johnson had his office bugged to record the conversation in which he told Robert Kennedy, then the Attorney General, that he could not be his running mate. When Kennedy left, Johnson ordered the technicians from the White House Communications Agency (an offshoot of the Army Signal Corps), who had installed the bug, to play back the tape.

To everyone's surprise, the voices of the President and the Attorney General were unintelligible, even though the machinery was found to be in perfect working order and the tape was of the highest quality available. The Army technicians surmised that a powerful electro-magnetic field had been present in the Oval Office during the Johnson-Kennedy talk and this degaussing field, now vanished, erased the tape while it was being recorded.

Someone suddenly recalled that Kennedy had held a large brief case on his lap during the entire talk. "The son-of-a-bitch," Johnson said. "He didn't trust me."

Everyone present, including the President, had a good laugh. It was the kind of laughter that Lyndon Johnson's successor in office could not comprehend.

Drinan's Distress

Congressman Robert Drinan reports to his Massachusets constituents that in the first four days after his impeach-Nixon resolution was introduced "more than a thousand messages came from all over the country" and were "overwhelmingly favorable."

Drinan expressed gratification with the response and with the "surprisingly broad press coverage." Nevertheless, he confessed distress. "The past three months have been intensely difficult for me," he said.

"The lack of credibility and even competence in the Administration is beyond belief," he explained. "At the same time, the failure of the Congress to move into the moral vacuum with domestic and international programs is equally distressing."

Odds and Ends

— Cited as the type article that will be appearing in the projected national bi-weekly, *New Times*: "If they fought it out today, America would root for Goliath."

— The Chicago newsletter *Overview* scores the silence of the nation's religious leaders on Watergate. Says *Overview*: "The secular press, in fact, seems to be the only voice concerned about the moral aspects of bugging, stealing, perjury, corruption, false witness and doing anything to justify the end of power."

— A London *Times* feature occasioned by the 200th anniversary of the suppression of the Jesuits says that at the top of the order's modern priorities comes justice and peace, which, adds the *Times*, "is a fashionable Roman Catholic euphemism for politics." The *Times* wasn't Jesuit-baiting, however, for it credited the Jesuits' politics with having a "moral edge." JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Political Fiction?

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Your "Screen" reviewer, Colin Westerbeck Jr. [May 25] apparently stands alone among the critics of *Stage of Siege*. Without exception the other reviews I have seen (*Newsweek*, New York *Times*, Washington *Post* and *Star*, Fort Wayne *News-Sentinel*) recognize this product as blatant propaganda.

In the Washington *Star* (July 1) Ernest W. Lefever, senior fellow of the Brookings Institution, describes the movie as ". . . a Marxist diatribe that omits, fabricates or twists facts to suit its propaganda purpose." Smith Hempstone (also *Star*, April 14) concludes that *Siege* ". . . slanders a man who cannot defend himself and presents a false picture of conditions in Uruguay. It is, to be plain, in the ignoble tradition of the Big Lie."

Westerbeck accepts the loaded dice of this production as authentic revelation about ". . . the sort of Americans who are employed by our government to meddle in other people's governments." Though he recognizes that this movie takes direct aim at the person of—and approves the assassination of—Mr. Dan Mitrione, Westerbeck throughout his piece compares it to a political fiction thriller, *Scorpio*. How can a man casually compare a fictional film of this type with one based on actual persons and incidents? When dealing with real life, it is necessary to ascertain the facts. Westerbeck gives the impression that he simply and willingly accepts Costa-Gravas' propaganda as factual.

For instance, he states that ". . . a good family man (Santore, i.e., Mitrione) is *revealed* to be an agent, a torturer and perhaps even a murderer." To speak in this fashion of a fictional character is common and inocuous; but to say that a flesh-and-blood human is revealed as evil means that you agree with the portrayal. Similarly, he speaks of a pattern of repetition,

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DOLLARS & RUBLES

Not so many years ago, the United States and the Soviet Union were compared to two scorpions in a bottle, locked in a struggle to the death. Since then, relations between the two nuclear superpowers have changed radically, and one would have to be a madman not to appreciate the resultant easing in world tensions. Nonetheless, welcome as the current détente is, nagging questions persist.

It is not just the grain sale and the ironic fact that as a result of it bread is far cheaper inside the USSR than it is in the U.S. As Secretary of the Treasury George P. Shultz recently admitted, the United States got burned on that deal, but we have some confidence in his assurance that it won't happen a second time, at least on the sheer dollars and rubles level. But should the U.S. be satisfied with striking a bargain with the USSR merely on the ground that it is economically profitable for us? Some argue or simply assume that a gradually improving standard of living inside the Soviet Union will automatically ensure progress in the broad field of human rights; we fail to see their reasoning.

The most striking words of warning on this subject have come from Andrei D. Sakharov, the dissident Soviet physicist. Western reconciliation with the USSR on Moscow's terms, he warned, poses a serious threat to the world. According to the Russian scientist, unqualified willingness to improve relations with the Soviet would "mean cultivating a country where anything that happens may be shielded from outside eyes—a masked country that hides its real face. No one should be expected to live next to such a neighbor, especially one who is armed to the teeth." As part of the economic bargaining process, Sakharov urged, pressure should be brought to bear on the USSR to increase freedom inside its borders. At the very least, in his opinion, the minimum that should be required would be the linking of easier East-West trade terms with unrestricted emigration from the Soviet Union—a position that apparently coincides with the views held by the majority in Congress.

The reasons so many Congressmen already support some form of pressure on the USSR are not hard to find. The record of the Soviet Union on human rights is long and somber, in its persecution of religion, especially now of

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the Jews, in its show-trials and staged confessions, in its dispatch of critics into mental hospitals or labor camps, in its general suppression of human freedom. No one can imagine, of course, that outside influence will cure or even ameliorate such practices inside Soviet Russia very easily. Any attempt at achieving internal change in another country has to be very low-key, and this would be particularly true in the case of the USSR which is highly sensitive to any show of outside pressure. One danger, for example, would be to cause the ouster of leaders committed to easing tensions in favor of leaders of the old Stalin-like posture. But determined if quiet diplomatic efforts might bear fruit, for this country does have certain valuable bargaining chips that could be used.

The USSR is suffering certain obvious weaknesses at home. It has had two bad harvests in a row; it is feeling the pinch of the arms race, perhaps even more than we; the specter of China casts a long shadow. The Soviet Union therefore wants and needs technological know-how in crucial fields; it seeks most-favored-nation status and long-term credit on favorable terms, in exchange for U.S. access to Soviet resources, such as natural gas. In general, the USSR seeks more relaxed and closer U.S.-Soviet ties, in part because of its fear of China. Far-reaching economic agreements with the U.S. are important to the Soviet leadership, therefore, especially to Mr. Brezhnev, and the U.S. thus has a certain amount of leverage. No one wants a return to the bad old days in the worst of the Cold War, certainly, but the issue of internal freedom raised by Sakharov and other heroic dissidents inside the USSR is crucial. In negotiating for an economic deal with the Soviet Union, can we not at the same time nudge that nation a little way in the direction of more freedom?

Shifting Mood In India

Perhaps the most striking change I sensed in a recent three-week visit to India was a widespread criticism of the United States. That criticism came from that segment of the press usually most sympathetic to America, and it related to many issues other than Vietnam. Why has this mood developed in the world's largest democracy of almost 600 million people?

Probably the overriding fact in the India of the past three years has been its growing self-confidence—surely one of the most promising aspects of the Indian scene today. That self-confidence is rooted in at least four significant substantive developments.

For one thing, despite the present food crisis brought on by three years of drought in vast areas of the country, India has made remarkable progress in food production over the past six years. Even in the current "famine" situation India expects to import less than one-fifth the amount of food imported annually just a few years back—despite 85 million more mouths to feed than in 1967. The "green revolution," based on new wheat and rice strains, is a success, even though not a panacea. One unfortunate consequence is that disparities between rich and poor farmers have increased. Despite this and many other problems, India may have turned the corner of food self-sufficiency. For a people who have lived for centuries in the shadow of hunger, the prospect of meeting food requirements is an exhilarating experience.

Another crucial element in the new self-confidence is India's successful participation in the "liberation" of Bangladesh from Pakistan. Not all the repercussions of that tragic conflict have been felt yet. But the break-up of Pakistan, with 65 million on India's Northwest border and 75 million on her Northeast frontier, has enormous significance. Most visible is the radically altered military situation. Equally significant is the new morale of the Indian army. Sorely tested by the Chinese incursions in 1962, frustrated on several occasions in mini-wars with Pakistan over Kashmir, and often maligned in the press, the army participated in a decisive victory.

At a still deeper level, the creation of Bangladesh as a secular state is felt to be a profound vindication of India's commitment, ever since Partition in 1947-48, to a secular state philosophy. Despite internal pressures from traditionalist Hindu elements, India has steadfastly rejected a theocratic state as anachronistic. Contrarily, from the formation of the Muslim League, the ideal of an Islamic state has played a major role in the development of Pakistan. Many Indians are convinced that the break-up of Pakistan proves the soundness of their own secular state model.

A third factor in the new self-confidence is Prime Minister Gandhi's impressive electoral victory in 1971. Many had come to fear that without strong central leadership the country would meander aimlessly and ineffectually.

The 1971 electoral campaign revived flagging spirits. Mrs. Gandhi caught the people's imagination. Her moves to deprive the princes of their annual governmental subsidies was a vivid gesture of siding with the poor, and against the *status quo*. The nationalization of some banks and an increasingly assertive attitude toward the United States kindled new hopes that something would be done to build a socialist society. Under Mrs. Gandhi's leadership, the Congress party moved to the left, thereby capturing the allegiance of many of the poor, and bringing new prestige and power to central government.

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A final element in the new mood is the new relationship which India is evolving with the United States. It is instructive for Americans to ponder that emerging relationship, both for what it says about Indo-American relationships, and U.S. relationships with many other nations as well. Recently India has turned more visibly to the Soviet Union in a deliberate effort to decrease its long-term reliance on the United States—a confirmation of India's avowed neutralism. This reorientation should be seen at several levels.

Most conspicuously, India's reaction against the United States may be seen as irritation with an alleged pro-Pakistan stance in the Bangladesh affair. Indeed, the U.S. branded India the aggressor in that conflict, and sent units of the Seventh Fleet close to Indian territorial waters. Numerous other surface symptoms of friction could be adduced. Were these events the root cause of the friction between the two countries, one could hope that the naming of Ambassador Moynihan—who has a good reputation in India—could repair the damage. That is not necessarily the case.

These more ephemeral events surfaced deeper forces already at work. One such force was an increasing disenchantment with the capitalist economic model. Despite sizable economic aid from Western countries, and a GNP growth rate of almost 4 percent per year, there has been a growing conviction among many Indians that the capitalist system could not surmount basic and increasing disparities between the rich and the poor. Furthermore, there has been a growing fear that a capitalist approach in India would make her more dependent on world capitalist powers.

A second sub-surface force is an increasing awareness that while political and economic independence are key elements in national freedom, these are rooted in a third factor—cultural independence. In many countries this is likely to be the dominant issue for the 1970's.

Several factors converge to raise the issue of cultural imperialism. One is the obvious clay feet of Western and technological societies (racism, Vietnam, pollution, drugs, energy crises). A more positive factor is the resurgence of religious and cultural values, and a deeper appreciation for the contribution of tradition to both social cohesion and social change. A third factor is a sharpened appreciation for the value of pluralism and diversity in the world community, coupled with an unwillingness to permit technological and utilitarian values to sweep aside all others. In short, Indians today are struggling to find their own identity as a nation, rooted in the past, yet capable of meeting twentieth-century expectations.

Finally, current tensions between the U.S. and India have a deeper level, perhaps largely unconscious. This deeper level is the ambivalent feelings which inevitably grow on both sides of a donor-recipient relationship. For years India has relied heavily on the United States for food. Such imports, while necessary, may have retarded food production in India. More basically, this long-term dependency relationship has developed, on the Indian side, both gratitude and resentment, and on the American side, condescension and arrogance.

One basic reason for the exhilaration and self-confidence in India over the past two years is the feeling that this ambivalence toward the U.S. has been resolved. Objectively speaking, perhaps there has been no resolution, and a similar ambivalence may grow *vis à vis* the Soviet Union. But right now Indians sense a partial resolution of that ambivalence toward American which has been so debilitating.

Why debilitating? Because in some ways the aid relationship perpetuated colonial attitudes. The major liability of colonialism was its systematic alienation of people from their own traditions, values and decision-making. Foreign aid programs which perpetuate dependency are — notwithstanding temporary advantages —a threat to freedom and violate humanization. Consider the impact that PL-480 funds have had on Indians. PL-480 funds are huge amounts of money deposited within India in payment for food imports. This enormous balance of rupees is drawn on by many American programs within India: e.g., the Peace Corps, information libraries, Fulbright scholars. Many Indians fear that these funds have been used to influence India's internal social, economic and political life—a veritable "fifth column" which they naturally resent.

This aid relationship generates a two-fold problem. One is the obvious tension engendered between "giver" and "receiver." The more subtle, but also more significant, dimension is what such a relationship does to the self-image of both parties. That is precisely why the new self-confidence on the Indian scene is so exciting. That new self-confidence brings with it a renewed determination to write one's own history, develop one's own economic and social structures, and live more deeply out of one's own heritage.

Obviously there are great dangers in this new mood; expectations raised but unfulfilled may result in even deeper disillusionment. But if partnership in a pluralistic context is ultimately the only valid way of thinking about international political, economic and cultural relationships, our dominant attitude as Americans should be one of rejoicing in the current Indian mood. The Indian giant—one-sixth of humanity, with a rich and diverse heritage—has a maturing self-confidence in its own significance. That may exasperate, frustrate and annoy Americans for a long time, but it is the condition on which true partnership, of relative equals, may gradually emerge.

RICHARD D. N. DICKINSON

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TEN YEARS BEFORE THE SCREEN

PETER STEINFELS

FOR THOSE of the decimal persuasion, tenth anniversaries are special. The March on Washington, the overthrow of Diem, the assassination of John F. Kennedy—during these months, those events which made the Fall of 1963 such a season of hopes and horrors are sure to be the object of public recollection and reflection. But the Fall of 1963 also saw another event, far less dramatic, yet perhaps of equal impact on American life. I refer to the introduction of the half-hour format on the evening televised news. The doubling of time devoted to the news was part cause, part effect of a major development: it sealed the nightly newscast as one of America's most important rituals. What has it done to us?

Two writers in the *Columbia Journalism Review* offered a partial answer a year ago. Why, asked Byron Shafer, a political scientist, and Richard Larson, a TV reporter, had the two traditional issues in American politics, foreign policy and economics, been joined, if not supplanted, by a third: that conglomerate of apprehensions and antagonisms—about race, street crime, patriotism, protest, and deviant lifestyles—which came to be symbolized in the phrase "law and order," or summed up in Wattenberg's and Scammon's term, the "social issue"? Why was it, in particular, that this issue was often felt most keenly by those farthest away from the phenomena it focused upon? Their conclusion: "The essential midwives in the birth of this issue are Messrs. Cronkite, Brinkley, and their brethren. . . . For it is the development of the evening news as a social institution which has made social disorganization a realistic threat to comfortably middle-class urbanites, to suburbanites, to rural residents—to all those, in short, who have seldom faced robbery, mugging, protest marches, chanting, block-busting, power salutes, or perhaps even hostile questions about their values."

Shafer and Larson were not launching another diatribe against "liberal" or "adversary" newsmen who distort the news. Like so many others who have examined broadcasting up close, they feel most of the problems are built right into the system. TV news is brief; the fight for ratings forces it to play from strength: its power to convey dramatic images. "The key characteristic of the world presented through TV is that life is apocalyptic." Attention is compelled in a way radio could never do. Radio might report the statistics of the uprising in Bangladesh—how many dead, how many homeless. TV gives you bloated bodies, scurrying rats, and starving women battling for food. Attention is similarly compelled when a Maoist professor announces in your living room that your values are contemptible and your way of life about to be extinguished.

For the average viewer, who struggles to order his life with a certain degree of predictability, who does not normally confront angry militants or capture bank robbers in the course of a day, and who adjusts to the radically new only gradually and with the lubricant of personal contact, the effect of such nightly bombardment is, understandably, "profound discomfort, insecurity, and rage."

Something else happens too. Oppositional minorities or alternative lifestyles are swiftly stereotyped and projected nationally. Their ranks swell unnaturally, as do the ranks of their opponents. Both advocates and antagonists seriously overestimate the importance of each new political movement or deviant lifestyle—and miscalculate their responses accordingly.

What is to be done? Two strategies are in the air. In some instances, broadcasters are trying to detach themselves from the anxiety their newscasts create by picturing the newscasters as "just folks" or by sugar-coating the news with irrelevant banter. Such efforts may or may not protect the TV establishment—probably not. But they do little to solve the basic problem.

The Nixon Administration, too, has recognized the emotions produced by TV news as essentially unstabilizing. They can only be "safe" if directed at the right targets and kept within bounds. The Administration's prescription is a "sense of responsibility," read, self-censorship, to be fostered by pressure on the networks and a shift of power to the local notables.

Shafer and Larson have two recommendations of their own. The first is pretty standard fare in such discussions: less predilection for the theatrical and more for the widely significant, less concentration on the single event and more on context and trends. In short, less exposure for Bella Abzug and more for the infinitely more powerful Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Ten points if you can recall his name.

Their other proposal is more challenging: we need not less news but *more*, not a half-hour nightly but an *hour*. A full hour would allow time to set the day's dramatic events in perspective, as well as present "mini-documentaries" on crucial topics.

Unfortunately, given the TV industry's structure and the past performance of public affairs programs, the adoption of these proposals is about as likely as the on-screen metamorphosis of Eric Sevareid into Socrates. But the problem remains.

Television can lull as well as stir. It unites as well as divides. But repeated attacks of pain followed by doses of pain-killer do not all cancel out to equal the tranquil life. The evening news has helped bring about a major transformation in the nature of American pluralism. That, however, is a subject for another week.

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WELFARE REFORM— WHAT NEXT?

MITCHELL I. GINSBERG

The nation is divided on what poverty is, and what to do about it

Those of us who are still concerned about the problems of poverty in America must recognize the fact that there will be no significant reform of the welfare system for the next few years. Politics and programmatic inadequacy killed the Family Assistance Plan, and no well-conceived or enthusiastically-supported alternative can be expected in the near future.

That is not to say that the urgency for welfare reform has lessened, either among the nation's 15 million welfare recipients, the approximately 40 million more who are below or just above the poverty line, the program's administrators, public officials and millions of American taxpayers—all of whom agree that welfare is a failure. But there, unanimity ends. The nation is divided on the definition of poverty—what it is and what to do about it; indeed, whether to do anything about it at all. Therefore, the urgent jobs today are reviving a concern for America's poor, developing a consensus on solutions and arousing a constituency. I suggest that this can be done by concluding the arguments about why FAP failed, resisting regressive legislation, correctly defining poverty problems and subjecting alternative solutions to rigorous analysis before formulating the next round of legislation.

First, some thoughts on the three-year struggle over the FAP. Those who were knowledgeable enough about it to explain and fight for it were probably too close to it to be objective about why FAP failed. Jim Welsh of the *Washington Star* in a thoughtful and penetrating *New York Times Magazine* article of January 7, 1973 and Pat Moynihan in his thorough and interesting book, *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income* have provided differing interpretations of what happened and why.

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In placing the Welsh article in the Congressional Record, Senator Abraham Ribicoff, who played a strong leadership role in the fight for welfare reform, said: "Welfare reform . . . was the victim of political posturing and misunderstanding on all sides. There is enough blame to go around, but there is no point in dwelling on that theme." While that makes sense, perhaps some looking back will help avoid repeating mistakes and false allegations in the future.

I do differ with Pat Moynihan in his interpretation of the role of social workers and liberals, however defined. What he overlooks is that many individuals and groups opposed the bill mainly because they didn't think it was good enough. Whether they were right or wrong is a matter of judgment. But it was *not* concern for their jobs or lack of concern for the poor that motivated their opposition.

Many who supported and worked to secure the passage of FAP also disagreed with some of its specific provisions, and sought to have them changed. The President's bill as it passed the House under the leadership of Ways and Means Committee Chairman Mills—with its coverage of the working poor and its provision for federal standards and administration—had good potential for progress in welfare. But we did not think FAP was "the greatest piece of legislation since the New Deal," a claim that the bill certainly contradicted as time went on and it was weakened rather than strengthened. What we did see in FAP was something better than what we had or were likely to get in the near future. It was to be a beginning, not an end.

To suggest that liberals killed the bill is to overlook the work done by such organizations as the AFL-CIO, the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, the UAW, the American Jewish Committee and many others. It is true that many social workers and their allies opposed the bill out of conviction even if sometimes with

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exaggerated rhetoric. However, most of them would be astonished by the contention that they had that much influence on Congress.

Who can ever really know why a bill fails to pass? In my judgment FAP's best chance was in 1969-70. It failed then because of inadequate preparation and effort by the Administration and other supporters; the determined opposition of Senator Williams, Senator Long and most other members of the Finance Committee; divisions among the bill's supporters; and the fact that the latter were consistently out-maneuvered by the opposition.

In 1971-72 the chances were never good, especially as the election year developed. Once welfare became an election issue that clearly appeared to favor President Nixon, there was little hope of passage of a bill that would remove welfare from the campaign. The last chance disappeared in the spring of 1972. Jeff Peterson of Senator Ribicoff's staff, Leonard Lesser of the Center for Community Change and I represented the Senator in lengthy negotiations with the staff of Health, Education and Welfare and the Department of Labor to work out the so-called Ribicoff-Richardson compromise. An agreement was reached that was acceptable to Senator Ribicoff and his colleagues and apparently to HEW and Labor Secretaries Richardson and Hodson.

The President was then faced with three options: to stay with his own bill; to attempt to work out an agreement with the Finance Committee; or to go along with the Ribicoff-Richardson compromise. It appeared clear that the last alternative provided the only reasonable prospect of legislation, but the first had greater political advantage.

At Senator Ribicoff's suggestion, I called Pat Moynihan and outlined the compromise, asking for his support and intervention with the President. He said that the terms of the agreement made complete sense and "were in line with what the President originally suggested." He agreed to call the President and get back to us in a few days.

Neither Senator Ribicoff nor I heard from him. About a month later he told me that he had tried his best, but that the President would not go along with the compromise. Actually, there was no guarantee that the compromise would have passed the Senate even with the President's support. It was near the end of the session and Senator Long with some colleagues was threatening a filibuster. But without Presidential support, passage was impossible.

To most of us it was clear—welfare was more important as a political issue than as a program.

The significance of all this for the future lies in the fact that meaningful welfare reform lacked a significant political constituency. In a national referendum such a program would have met overwhelming defeat. The public pressure that might have helped FAP was almost entirely lacking. Well, what does happen next? As I have indicated, probably not much in the near future. Those of us who supported meaningful welfare reform are likely to be immediately busy seeking to prevent more repressive legislation and regulations than now exist.

At the same time what is needed is a major rethinking of the basic approach to the issue of welfare and related programs. Aside from the politics there were basic substantive difficulties in the FAP approach which were never adequately considered. Senator Williams and his colleagues may have exaggerated the "notch problem" —the fact that a family can lose considerable benefits by earning a few more dollars and thus face a disincentive to earning more—but that is a problem, and not enough attention was given over to it until it was too late.

Also, there is the extremely difficult and indeed thus far the largely insurmountable problem of providing at least a minimally adequate level of payments for those who can't work, while maintaining reasonable incentives for those who do work but require supplementation. To cope with this problem it has been proposed that welfare recipients not have all their earnings subtracted from their payments, thus avoiding the so called 100 percent tax rate. But how much should be disregarded? Set the amount too low and presumably you create disincentives to work. Set it substantially higher, the costs rise sharply and many more people are on welfare.

Tinkering with the present welfare system is obviously not the route to the legislation of responsible programs. In addition to problems such as those I have just mentioned as besetting FAP, there is the overwhelmingly negative attitude toward welfare throughout the country. And just changing its name doesn't help. As a western state legislator put it, after I had spoken about FAP to a national conference he attended: "Commissioner, you explained the plan very well and I know you are trying to help the poor, but what we mean by welfare reform is getting people off welfare, not adding more."

While it is true that welfare reformers are interested in getting poor people the help they need rather than simply adding to the rolls, this appears to many to be a distinction without a difference. Therefore, it is crucial to take a take step back and look at the nature of the problems the system was supposed to confront.

A fundamental factor often overlooked is that the primary reason people are on welfare is that they are poor. Whatever else may be involved, there are still about 25 million people below the poverty line—approximately $4,000 a year for an urban family of four—and another 25 to 30 million at or just above it. That means 50-60 million Americans below what almost all of us would concede is a minimally decent standard of living. By any definition that's a problem, and it helps not at

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all to say that "the poor will always be with us," or that "they are rich in comparison with the poor in other countries."

A second key fact is that welfare is neither the basic cause of nor the solution to the poverty problem. Nor was the welfare program ever intended to be so. Basically, it was designed as a residual program to take temporary care of those not covered by one or another of the more basic programs. It has been the failures in our education and health systems, in our supposed commitment toward full employment, in our social insurance system including unemployment insurance, that have thrust on welfare a responsibility it was never designed to handle.

Up to now we have not been able to get beyond the confusing and largely fruitless debate about ineligibles, fraud, employables, illegitimacy, management or lack of

it, etc. These are important issues because of the money involved and the effect on public support or lack of it. There are both ineligibility and fraud, and to the maximum degree possible, they should be eliminated. (Incidentally, the need to differentiate between these two is long overdue. It is clear that more than half of the cases of ineligibility and over-payment are caused by mistakes, not fraud; and the mistakes are much more often made by the worker than by the recipient. Given the unbelievable complexity and variety of welfare systems in the 50 states and over 400 welfare jurisdictions, some of the mistakes seem impossible to eliminate. We must do better, but real progress will come only with significant change in a largely unworkable system.)

Meanwhile, the debate rages on about ineligibility. I don't know what the real figure is, and I doubt that anybody does; probably somewhat higher than I and my fellow professionals have usually estimated. At the same time it is much lower than the general public assumes. Let's do everything we legitimately can to reduce ineligibility and overpayments, but let's also be equally concerned about the eligibles rejected and those who receive under-payments.

Much the same sort of debate has gone on about the number of employables on welfare. An estimate largely depends on the extent to which one includes female-headed families (AFDC, the largest welfare category) in the discussion. Contrary to public belief, there are very few employable men on welfare, although the status of men who are related to welfare families but are not themselves on the rolls is a question not to be casually dismissed.

I have long felt that the issue of AFDC mothers' working is a highly over-rated one. Many mothers and their families would be better off with the mother employed. However, shouldn't that be their choice as it is for non-welfare mothers? The evidence overwhelmingly is that many more mothers want to work than are able to because of the unavailability of jobs or day care for their children. Leonard Goodwin in his recent book *Do the Poor Want to Work*? has shown that "welfare recipients, whatever their race or time spent on welfare, have essentially the same work ethic and life aspirations as do employed middle-class people."

The issue remains not willingness to work, but the availability of jobs. What is puzzling is the lack of attention given this essential issue. With an official unemployment rate only now getting down to 5 percent and the actual figures including the underemployed—those who have given up looking for work, etc.—more than double that, where are the jobs that welfare recipients are to fill? If these jobs are available, why the unemployment and the under-employment?

Much has been said recently about poor administration in welfare. Programs need to be better administered, and welfare has been slow to adopt modern management techniques and equipment. Until very recently, who was willing to invest the necessary resources? It is only a few short years since I spoke publicly about having to operate a billion dollar welfare program like a "corner candy store."

While doing everything we can to improve welfare administration, however, we should also respect the recent words of John Veneman, Under Secretary of HEW —"We are at best fighting a holding action in welfare administration today and . . . this state of events cannot greatly improve under existing law." Also, one of the very helpful studies in Public Welfare carried out for the Subcommittee on Fiscal Policy chaired by Congresswoman Martha Griffiths of the Joint Congressional Economic Committee makes the point that: "The present welfare system is an administrative nightmare: it may also be an administrative impossibility."

This review of the major difficulties with the present welfare program points to what I believe are inevitable conclusions: We must move to make welfare the residual system it was originally designed to be, by separating out as many individuals and groups as possible and keeping in the program only those for whom there are no viable alternatives. At the same time, we must have no illusions that any improved system can make up for the failures of such systems as health, education and employment. Not to do something significant about these

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systems will simply perpetuate dependency; but that is a subject for several other articles.

There are no blueprints to achieve welfare reform objectives, and there is no one program that provides a solution. Various alternatives will have to be considered and in some cases tested to provide a meaningful package of programs.

Over a period of time an expansion of the social insurance systems will be an absolutely essential element of this package. One significant step has already been given responsibility for administering the programs for the aged, blind and disabled. (Incidentally, the removal of requirements to take liens on a recipient's possessions and to hold relatives responsible for their care are two little-noticed, but very important improvements.) Over a period of time these programs can be more closely integrated into social security, although problems of funding and of the effect on the insurance concept will make this a politically touchy issue.

Separating out the unemployed and the clearly employable from welfare is another essential step. My colleague, Tom Joe, recently of HEW and now with McKinsey & Company, who has been doing some creative thinking in this area, points out that of 2.6 million parents in AFDC in 1970, 355,000 were employed either full time or part time; of those not currently employed, 1.6 million had previous employment experience and more than 1.1 million or 44 percent had actually been on unemployment insurance and had exhausted their benefits.

It is neither logical nor feasible to expect welfare to be responsible for most of these people. Much the same is true for those not yet employed but looking for their first job. What we have to recognize is the real problem; lack of work and adequate jobs. Only when we fully accept this essential fact can we move toward a solution. Inevitably, this means a strong commitment to a true full-employment policy which would guarantee jobs for all. Where the problem is lack of work, let us provide work and real jobs, not rhetoric like workfare and work ethic. For a nation presumably committed to the concept of work, our failure to develop and implement a realistic policy of full employment is baffling, to say the least.

As part of this type of employment policy, the unemployment insurance system or some similar program would become the mechanism for dealing with the weak spots and the limitations. Obviously, this would mean a drastically revised and strengthened unemployment insurance program with higher benefit levels, longer coverage, federal standards and some federal financing. Such drastic changes present many difficulties and will require the most careful working out. They will encounter very strong political opposition. But meaningful debate and action on them is long overdue. After all, unemployment insurance was the mechanism established for loss or lack of employment. It is time we began to use it more effectively rather than continuing to shift the burden to a welfare system which obviously cannot handle it.

This approach would remove most of the unemployed from welfare. Something would then have to be done about the working poor. Equity requires that some provision be made for the large number of persons who work full time but whose incomes are below an acceptable level. Their inclusion in the Family Assistance Plan was one of its most innovative features, but covering them under welfare creates many problems that appear to defy both practical and political solutions. The greatly expanded food stamp program has helped somewhat and a more realistic minimum wage with fuller coverage would reduce the number to be aided. But some federal system of supplementation of earned income for the working poor remains essential. There is a variety of possible approaches including but not limited to children's allowances, tax credits and wage supplements. Each one needs to be discussed thoroughly, planned and tested for workability, costs and political feasibility. But the problem will not go away, nor can it be allowed to sink back into limbo.

What I have outlined is a conception rather than a plan that probably raises more questions than it answers. What is needed is a package approach that separates the unemployed and the working poor from those on welfare. Only then can we begin to define welfare as a truly residual program. Only then can we begin to develop a federally administered and financed income maintenance system at an adequate level for those in need and who will continue to be in need until health, education and other systems begin to carry out their responsibilities more effectively.

LEWIS TURCO

PROTHALAMION

And in the morning it is a wedding
of starlight and winter. Over the mountains
the cold sun breaks pinelimb, hardwood bough,
touches the moss against the bark
where snow levels away toward the downlands.
It is a wedding, then, here among the houses
where drifts have fallen off from ridgeline
into meadow, into streets and glowing windows,
where men stand behind glass to gaze into glass,
to feel an edge of steel against hair and flesh,
where women lie dreaming awake in their
morning linen. It is a wedding, then,
of linen and steel, of starlight and winter.
It is a wedding of moss and streets.

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FEMININE MINISTRY AND CLERICAL CULTURE

THOMAS FRANKLIN O'MEARA

The official church has set up all-male game rules; they will change

There is a quiet revolution at work in Roman Catholic parishes. Priesthood pursues its identity-crisis, while ministry discovers a new and varied popularity. The structural changes of Vatican II, especially developing councils at various levels, are leading to further, more radical changes. And deeper influences are at work, such as the dissatisfaction in America with inept institutions and the movement for women's liberation. Pastoral teams are being formed; a diversified active ministry arises as an implicit challenge to cultural priesthood. The decline of the previous forms of religious education along with the explosion in personal problems as well as in population have indicated in a brief time the need for "experimental ministries." Last year the swell began; more and more parishes have coordinators for distinct programs, and in some areas, especially Detroit, the parochial staff goes beyond priests, first- or second-class, to include sisters and laymen.

For a teacher in a graduate school of theology or in a seminary-cluster the question of the future parish ministry is raised in an unsettling way. The student body may no longer be either clerical or male. The students' approaches and their goals are ahead of the organized church. Because most dioceses provide little leadership in new approaches to ministry (and the national church provides none at all), the students' future is uncertain. They are preparing, often at considerable self-sacrifice and with high motivation, for . . . what? They understand the church differently. Their ecclesiology is local and biblical, an ecclesiology based upon development and meeting the real needs of American Christians today. Neither their theology nor their professional training meets any enthusiastic response from most leaders in the church whose budget and image of the church is frozen.

Nevertheless, we are in the midst of what will be an extensive change in the parish. Women, especially women religious, are the catalysts of this change, *because as religious or laywomen rather than as a new minister they have been implicitly admitted to ministry*. What is the relationship of ministries to women? This is not a discussion of whether women can be ordained to one particular historically conditioned ministry—the episcopacy and priesthood—but whether they are de facto involved in the ministries of the *ecclesia* as these are described in the books of the New Testament. Women have been excluded from the ministry-priesthood until now. Yet, if you have the pleasure to meet one associate pastor for a particular parish in Virginia or Chicago you will find *her* charming.

Paul VI's recent statement on orders only marginally touched women. Pope Paul does occasionally suffer from a bad press. In this case, a document which was intended to be a modernization of ordination ceremonies and an introduction of parish members into the ceremonies of the church had a single line excerpted and was turned into a controversial, anti-feminist action. The introduction of laymen within parishes into the roles of reader and Eucharistic minister, and even the continuation of women in this role (without ordination) is progress. Nevertheless, this document reflects sharply the basic problem we are discussing. For it, too, deep in the medieval cultural modifications of Christian ministry, speaks of "orders" for "laymen," and allows women to minister as long as they are not publicly ordained by the church for that ministry.

Ministry in the New Testament has many characteristics. Three are especially relevant: 1) all Christians have a ministry; 2) ministry can have a wide diversification, serving others within the community and through the community serving the world; 3) ministry is public action. The New Testament exegete Ernst Käsemann writes:

> For Paul, unity in the body of Christ does not mean the sameness of all the members; it means the solidarity which can endure the strain of the differences—the different gifts and different weaknesses of the different members. . . . A member of the Christian community does not represent a static order, although most Christians assume that this is the case. He is constantly representing others and is in confrontation with them. Everyone has his own gifts and his own duty; everyone is irreplaceable in the service assigned to him and unmistakable in his particular capacities and weaknesses. That is why the apostle is always repeating the watchword, "Everyone according to the gifts which God has given him, everyone according to his calling." In redemption, as in creation, everything is

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differentiated because otherwise no mutual service is possible. God does not want stereotypes.

For some reason Jesus instituted an ecclesial religion. In the spectrum of world-religions there are many which are not communal. In Christianity involvement with people is central to religious experience. Christian membership channels and unleashes the natural drives present in all of us to form and be nourished in groups of people, to realize the very religious transcendence of our individuality within the family of others.

In the New Testament there are different kinds of "churches," and there are various kinds of people in this or that community. Every baptized member in the *ecclesia* has a ministry, something to do. Baptism is not an initiation into a frozen state of life where prudent virtue is guarded like a candle in a windy night. Baptism implies discipleship and servanthood in a general sense. Naturally there are levels of ministry and office. Apostle, presbyter, bishop, deacon carry an intensity of public and professional ministry in the New Testament, but they do not separate themselves into a priestly class who alone possess ministry, active service.

The Protestant Reformers intended to revive the involvement of all Christians in ministry when they spoke of the priesthood not of the laity but of all Christians. Unfortunately, this movement went in the wrong direction. Instead of offering a theological and practical rationale for a total incorporation into a *diverse* ministry, it ended in contradictions such things as "laity" in the Christian church. The *ecclesia* includes only active members, only doers. A lay person is by definition someone who doesn't do anything, someone who doesn't know anything, someone who is not really in the circle.

In that sense there is no laity in Christian community, for baptism is the initiation of a believer who must exteriorize what is internal. He or she is involved not only in sacred worship on Sunday, but in its overflow into worship of God in the world through service. A Christian's response to grace is crystallized by his personal, private life and by *his mediation* of the Kingdom in history and society. Baptism and faith are not the same as public ordination to ministries, but it is the introduction into a particular religion where communal ministry is united with individual commitment. Ordination is the public commission of someone's involvement in a *special* ministry calling for preparation and time. The community recognizes this significant service and asks of God that it be empowered by him.

There can be many ministries. Today we have only one ministry, the priesthood. The vast majority of Christions are involved in no ministry. The revolution in the parish is most marked by the parish's introduction of Christians beyond clerics into the ministry *and* by its grass-roots creation of new ministries, especially in education. Bishop, priest and deacon is one way of realizing leadership in the church, but it does not claim to exhaust ministry. Ministry is free to realize itself in different ways so that it can meet the needs of the times.

Ministry is action. The Christian is a servant, but a servant characterized by effort rather than by lowly condition or humble waiting. The Word is heard and done. John has the remarkable phrase that we should "do the truth" (3:21). Previously, action was translated into the practice, mainly interior, of private virtues. The New Testament is not content with private religion. With its anger towards interior self-justification and external pharisaism, the New Covenant insists upon faith and action being inseparable. Faith involves public action because our lives are public. Ministry incarnates faith through private charity into the sphere of the local community, the communities of man, the Kingdom.

The early Christians consciously disassociated themselves from the Jewish and Greek priesthoods. These were heavy with sacral status. The Christians created their own words, making everyday verbs into nouns. A bishop is an overseer; a deacon serves other people or waits on tables; an evangelizer announces good things; an interpreter discerns. The English language, woven with German and Romance strands, has over the centuries resacralized these words. Bishops and priests now represent cultic figures in a special state. With some notable and irritating exceptions they are not often found where the action is.

Ministerial action involves the public sphere. As long as most Christians are merely "the laity," American faith is interiorized and separated from the public sphere. Evangelization about the Gospel and social issues is relegated to private judgment. Should public prophecy, i.e., the announcement of the Gospel, confront some of our penal systems with the dignity of the new man? Christian "doing" must be more than the charitable imitation of middle-class life. Ministry means action within the community and out of the community for others. If this is true, ministry is as central as private Christian commitment, as central as life-style. Private virtue is not the touchstone of faith, nor is one particular life-style, e.g., celibacy, a necessary condition for what is the easy burden of every believer.

Women in the Ministry

More and more women, either are in the ministry (but unrecognized by the church), or want to enter ministry (with public recognition). If they are Christians professionally trained and involved in a full-time effort to serve the presence of the Spirit in the world, are they not ministers? Their apostolates are concrete, particularized expressions of the ministry of evangelization (education) or of service (health and welfare). Recently they have begun to participate in the ministry of leadership in parishes. Why is ordination as public commission withheld? Why is ministry not officially diversified?

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Because it threatens not the church but clerical culture?

The question of sisters is more awkward. Sisters are traditionally called laity. Yet, they are clearly the opposite of the anonymous, non-involved laity. Sisters have an apostolate, while male clerics occupy the priesthood. Sisters are in this way more discriminated against than other women. They have been given the job but not the mission. Their access to what is really ministry comes not through ordination but through vows into a state of life. That state of life, being-a-religious, does delineate them from the laity in the area of private life, but in terms of ministry, where the more important differences lie, they are numbered among the masses.

If we ask the question, can women be involved in ministries, the answer can only be affirmative. Every Christian may enter ministry, and women in their apostolates fulfill the conditions of ministry. The official church has set up different categories (fashioned in other political philosophies), different game-rules and so come up with different states, and identified all ministry with the male priesthood. That will change, and with the change will come for women public recognition and official commission as full-time ministers (ordination). The report of American theologians on the Permanent Diaconate says:

> Today the church is faced with the changed role of women both within the world and within the church. It behooves the church as it did St. Paul to be sensitive to its social milieu. It is the privilege of the church to have within its community not only men . . . but also women who have proved their competence in various fields and are eager to share their talents with others in the church.

The question around which controversy swirls—whether women can be ordained to the particular ministry of bishop or pastor—is not solved here. It is secondary, dependent upon a group of sociological as well as theological factors. Is this a ministry which, from the point of view of the sociology and psychology of this particular American Christian community, women are suited for? An overemphasis on this question distracts from the critical and creative examination of the parish as the place for universal and pluriform Christian ministry.

The way you live is not the same as what you do. Life-style is not identical with ministry. Now only Christians who enter into the life-style of celibacy have access to ministry (the permanent diaconate is a hesitant exception to this but not a sign of a new era). While recent centuries have emphasized more and more the active side of religious life, it was conceived as a celibate life-style. Moreover, the church had, in the era of monastic prominence, compelled even the "clergy-in-the-world" to enter celibacy. The ministry was then placed behind a single life-style.

More and more we are going to see a reverse. Instead of life-style controlling ministry, a variety of people with different life-styles will be interested in a variety of ministries. Will the official church be able to face this situation? Until recently, in the atmosphere of a celibate community, young men were trained to a combination of state of life (and status) and the monoform ministry. Women entering a convent were, similarly, entering a schizophrenic world where structures of contemplative monasticism were ineptly linked to the most strenuous activity. The local community has had no voice, no opportunity to discern talent and charism. This may be reversed. A life-style will be chosen because it serves a ministry, or because it serves the spiritual development of the minister. There will be more give and take between the two.

Life-style is something different from ministry. Belonging to a celibate community is a charism, complicated because it has relationships to the individual's spiritual growth, to the health and work of the members of the community, to the world as sign and leaven. Marriage, rich in support, is also a charism. Charism is not the same as ministry. A person interested in ministry is influenced by two separate but related spiritual forces: the call to ecclesial discipleship and the charism of a life-style. The life-style need not always precede and dominate as it has in the past. Ministry channels charisms into concrete service.

The ministry is tightly linked to status, and through status to a culture. The priesthood today is entangled with "clerical culture." This is the network of taboos and privileges, clothes and tasks, isolation and domination which surrounds the celibate Roman Catholic priest, especially the pastor. From another direction we meet a similar phenomenon in "female religious life." It has been a state of life. Women trained and active in ministry are recognized only as laity. They, too, find themselves in a cultural state-of-life crisis. Today we can hardly compare the two cultures, of the priest and of the sisters, since American sisters embarked over five years ago on critical revitalization of their identity and goals. It is cultural crisis which produces identity crisis. In our church as in our culture there is a confusion between ministry and state of life. For instance, American political leaders (and religious leaders) increasingly appeal to their office, to their burdens in order to justify

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poor action or inaction. They seek self-justification away from supervised service by an appeal to their status.

We have not yet left the Middle Ages. There the fabric of society was constituted by states of life not by roles, by who you were rather than by who you were and what you did. Society seeks a stable fabric. The church by the third century was divided into two states: clerics and laity. Piesthood became a state within society, rather than an action of the Spirit. When the monks and nuns appeared, feudal society designated them by their place in the medieval hierarchy. An example of this is Thomas Aquinas who concludes the second part of the *Summa theologiae* on the life of the Christian not with ministries and professions but with states of life.

States of life are stable as long as society remains stable; similarly, states of life reflect the society's turmoil and identity crises. Once a young man went to West Point in honor, but he may now go to West Point with a certain amount of disparagement from his peers. States of life are closely related to status and privilege, to visible symbols, to clothes, to claims. Ministry, on clerics and laity. Priesthood became a state within society, rather than an action of the Spirit. When the monks the other hand, and Christian life (because Christian life through baptism lives in ministry) is related more to search and growth, to life within and without, to service of other people, to change, to self-criticism, to visibility in the world. An important insight is that the two major apostolates of religious women, schools and hospitals, partook of the characteristics of status over against ministry. Often, they were conducted as an appendage of the convent; many of their attitudes and spiritualities were cloistered and female. Sacrifice and unthinking theology molded school and convent together in the sister's personal life. The phrase "convent school" illustrates the fact and the difficulties produced by this too intimate union of life and work. Such a personal and indiscriminate union of what should be separate is one cause for the emotional crisis in identity as the school system declines.

When status and life-style are brought close at a time of rapid cultural change, there is friction. State of life clings to things which ministry in a heroic faith says it must transcend. A healthy secularization has reduced visible symbols as being guarantees; social crises over society have demanded a new kind of action. This returns us to our original themes: the place of women in ministry, the revolution in the local church as pluriform ministries are rediscovered. The movement anticipated in some theological schools and begun in some dioceses is intelligible only if we separate ministry from life-style, and if we realize the New Testament's vision of the local church. A woman can bring many things to ministry: freedom for the Kingdom, professional expertise, leisure for listening to the Spirit's word to our times, insight born of love and sympathy, a creative independence from the normal order. Still, she brings it in order to be publicly commissioned in ministry.

The expectations and psychological climate of women interested in ministry are changing, and yet are understandably ambiguous. Only they can appreciate the extent of subtle psychological oppression which all minority groups (including most of the young male clergy) experience. If equal ministry is difficult for the authorities of the church to initiate, it is often difficult for women to follow. Liberation and ministry, then, go together since one Gospel paradox is that freedom comes from human service. In the midst of these changes women are initiating not a power play for ordination to the solitary pastorate as it now is, but a movement towards liberation of the ministry itself.

COP OUTS

THE SCREEN

The idea behind *Cops and Robbers* is that a cop could be open and public about committing a crime that would require anyone else to be covert and surreptitious. This obviously makes it a lot easier for the cop to do it, as two New York cops named Tom (Cliff Gorman) and Joe (Joseph Bologna) realize one day. Tom goes to the nearest Mafioso and asks what stolen goods would be worth $2,000,000 to him. Receiving an order for $10,000,000 worth of "bearer" bonds, Tom and Joe then go to work figuring out how to stick up a brokerage house. When they finally put their plan into operation, they bungle so thoroughly that they have to rob the Mafia as well as the broker to get their two million. Yet they manage to succeed in both misbegotten robberies with a sort of gracelessness that director Aram Avakian hopes we'll find funny.

In order to make it funny Avakian emphasizes the ordinariness of his heroes. He sees that the potential of Donald Westlake's script lies in not allowing these two corrupted Clark Kents to become supermen. As a rule on the screen nowadays, armed robbery is committed with hand-tooled equipment and clockwork precision. But the robbery in the works here is more along the lines of something designed by Rube Goldberg—a makeshift crime committed by weekend strategists, a job in which opportunity greatly surpasses expertise.

Avakian preserves the ordinariness of Tom's and Joe's lives by having them do their conspiring in the backyard pool, in a traffic jam, even at the supermarket. A supermarket is no doubt a location Avakian likes because it's not only open and public, but completely without romance or atmosphere. And far from inventing sensational gadgets or an ingenious *modus operandi* to commit their crime, Tom and Joe must ultimately rely on

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resources available to us all for the most commonplace activities. They convince the Mafia that they really have committed a multi-million dollar robbery not with a display of the bonds themselves, but with the story about the bonds printed in the *Daily News*, which anyone can buy for seven cents. Even a stolen police car proves, like the bonds, too hot to handle. They therefore ditch it and have to make their getaway on a city bus. Succeeding as they do, through public services provided for the common man, they themselves manage to remain common men for us.

The robbery is of course all the zanier for being committed by such improvised and unexceptional means. But that atmosphere of everyday reality that Avakian is so careful to maintain can also work against the comedy and defeats it in some ways. To make Joe a credible character, for instance, the filmmakers decide they must supply him with a motive for committing the robbery. The motive that is easiest for us to accept in any New York cop is the desire to get out, to escape the danger and ugliness he must expose himself to day after day. To instill this motive, Avakian first sticks Joe in an ambulance with an hysterical murderess, then lets him watch his partner bleed half to death while a stickup victim complains because his money wasn't recovered.

Once we have seen Joe's daily routine this way, it is hard to find his situation funny anymore. When Joe panics during his own robbery and is about to shoot a stockbroker, we can't help the chilly feeling that he must truly be capable of it after having worked in the street. It all makes the crime seem pretty desperate, not light-hearted and fun to watch as it's supposed to be.

James William Guercio's *Electra Glide in Blue* has essentially the same social message as *Cops and Robbers*. The message is that there are only robbers now, no cops. In Avakian's film, the slickest crook of all is not a Mafioso, or even a cop, but an executive of the brokerage house. He reports the house's loss at $12,000,000, thus covering the $2,000,000 that he and his secretary steal for themselves after Joe and Tom have fled. In Guercio's film an Arizona motorcycle cop, John Wintergreen (Robert Blake), has but one dream in life: to become a detective on the homicide squad. But when he gets a chance to apprentice for the job, John discovers that such detectives are really venal, bigoted and stupid. John's patrol partner eventually proves himself dishonest as well, and even a crazy old prospector John befriends turns out to be a criminal. In the end a passing hippy, for whom John is trying to do a favor, blows John right out of the saddle.

But the real rip-off artist here is director Guercio himself, who has lifted most of his movie from other motorcycle movies popular in the last ten years. If the cops and robbers again seem interchangeable, perhaps it is only because Guercio has so often taken sequences from films about motorcycle gangs and transposed them to motorcycle cops. *Electra Glide* begins with an inversion of the dressing scene in Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*, and ends the way that *Easy Rider* does. The difference is that, instead of having a Hell's Angel put on his levis and leather, Guercio has John put on his uniform. Instead of watching some law-and-order conservative shotgun hippy Hopper, we now get to watch a hippy doing it to John.

As derivative and over-produced as *Electra Glide* is, however, it is still in one way a more agreeable movie than *Cops and Robbers*. The latter attempts to domesticate the the absolute corruption of society as if corruption itself could be made into a new ethic, as if movies could promote socially acceptable crime as they once promoted clean living. But in Guercio's film there is still one honest cop left, John. Robert Blake's performance as John saves *Electra Glide* from some of its worst moments, including that scene out of *Scorpio Rising*. Because we see John's uniform go on piece by piece in extreme close-ups, the way the man actually getting dressed might see it himself in the mirror, we adopt John's point of view in the scene. He's such an enthusiastic devil that it's impossible not to be taken in by him. Even Guercio seems to realize this, for he lets Blake polish his performance again later when a temporary promotion entitles John to suit up as a plainclothesman.

But in the end, after John has been shot, we revert to the only point of view left, the murderer's. As the hippy's Volkswagen pulls away from the scene of the crime we must watch John's body recede from view where it fell on the highway. And this tracking shot goes on for seven minutes so Guercio can play some idiotic rock tune he's trying to hype with this movie. Guercio used to be a producer in the music business, which is of course noted for producing more swipe-ola than music. John survives betrayal by detectives, lovers, partners and lunatics in this film; but none of that prepares him to cope with somebody who's been a producer in the music business. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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STILL GROWING UP AT 25

DENNIS HALE

News from Nowhere
EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN
Random House, $7.95

This past year, television celebrated its 25th anniversary—an event which was startling only because it reminded us what a novelty television really is. Those of us under the age of 30 or so are especially liable to take the tube for granted as a thing that has always been with us, and so it was a shock to read in *News From Nowhere* that network evening news programs were, until as recently as 1963, only 15 minutes long. So pervasive has the impact of televised news become that it is difficult to imagine even a different format for it—and so much more difficult to imagine it not being there at all. (Easy to wish it; hard to imagine what it would be like.)

It is fortunate, therefore, that at the 25-year mark we should have a book as good as this one. Edward Jay Epstein has examined every facet of television news—its economic context, its political structure, the technology of broadcasting, the personalities of television journalists and executives, its history. He has watched shows being filmed, edited, and narrated, and he has talked to hundreds of people in the business, from network executives to film technicians. The result is, I think, an unassailable argument that television news is a public menace.

Industry leaders became properly defensive a while back when Spiro Agnew began questioning the integrity of network news. At that time they called for "constructive criticism" of the industry, and now they have got it. This particular piece of "constructive criticism" however is so devastating that I don't see how they can possibly respond to it except by quitting television and going into some more socially useful line of work.

Epstein's argument is that what we see on television is determined by the economic and organizational needs of the technology and the industry, and not by the personal whims or opinions of journalists, anchormen, and network executives. The basic constraint is an economic one: ratings. High ratings mean ad money (the change from the 15-minute format to the 30-minute format in 1963 gave the networks only 5 extra minutes of commercial time, taken from local stations, and that 5 minutes earned CBS $36 million in one year). But news programs earn relatively low ratings, and a low-rated show early in prime time tends to bring down the ratings for the shows that follow. Thus, networks are skeptical about news and public affairs programs to begin with, and budgets are constantly being questioned. (If it weren't for the "public interest" clause in the Federal Communications Act, there might be no news programs at all.)

But the technological constraint is in some ways even more damaging. A televised news program must *show* something. It must be dramatic. Reuven Frank, producer of NBC News, told his staff that "every news story should have structure and conflict, problem and a denouement, rising action and falling action, a beginning, a middle, and an end." In other words, it should be exciting. If it can't be made exciting or dramatic, then it isn't news. It hardly needs to be said that the real world seldom works this way. Even stories that *do* contain action—riots, for example—are much more than *merely* action. In fact, the real story often lies beneath the visible surface, where the cameras cannot go.

The need for drama also encourages the use of stereotypes, the assumption being that a two- or three-minute film must communicate "the issues" quickly and simply. For this reason, network executives prefer stories that demonstrate recognizable figures ("angry students," "militant blacks," "stoic New Englanders," "laconic farmers," etc.) or easily grasped conflicts. Whites fighting with other whites, or blacks fighting blacks, is thought to be confusing; whites fighting with blacks makes a more "dramatic" story.

The ratings problem and the technological problem combine with the rules of the Federal Communications Commission (specifically, the Fairness Doctrine and the mandate to attend to "local needs") to further limit the effectiveness of television news. The Fairness Doctrine and the "local needs" rule have paradoxically worked to achieve the opposite of what they were intended to achieve. For fear of violating the Fairness Doctrine and the sensibilities of audiences and sponsors, issues are presented via a "dialectical model"—i.e., one party to a controversy says one thing, another side says something else, and the truth must lie somewhere in between. All issues are presumed to have two sides, and only two sides. Nor is this simply a matter of blind obedience to the FCC: Epstein found in his interviews that most newspeople tend to accept the dialectical model as a working proposition. Journalists who do not accept it do not advance. Under the Fairness Doctrine, moreover, truth is no defense. Even where the truth of a matter is known (to the extent that any truth can be known), public issues must still be presented in a way that leaves room for a "balanced judgment." Some people say migrant workers are exploited (interview with Cesar Chavez); some people say they are not (interview with a grower). The truth must lie somewhere

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in the "grey area" in the middle.

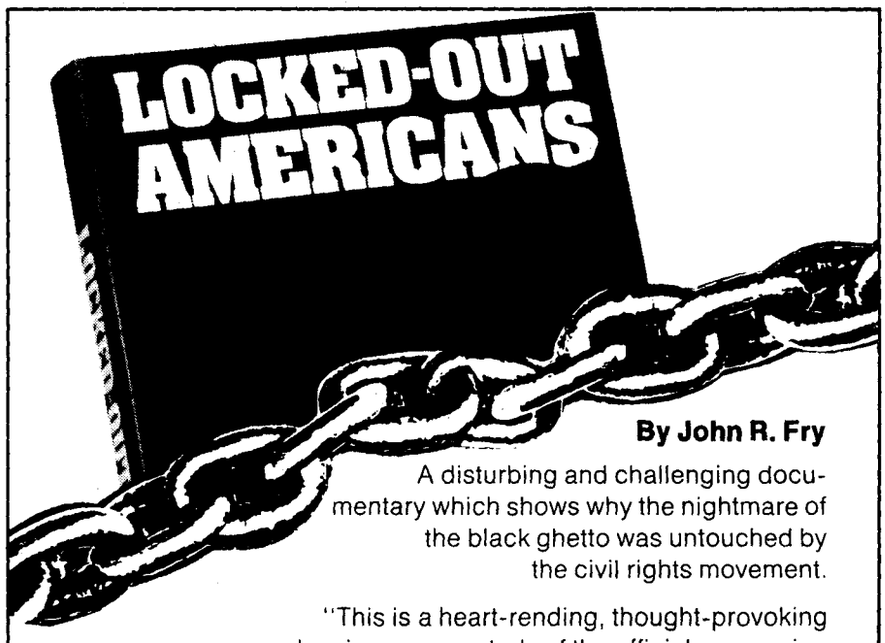
In the same way, economic, technological, and political constraints operate to vitiate the "local needs" rule. Local stations do not have the money (or so they say) to produce public affairs programming. But since the FCC requires such programming, local stations buy documentaries and similar specials from the networks, who in turn are forced by the "logic of the marketplace" to do specials that are generally relevant to all parts of the country without being tied too closely to any. After all, why would viewers in Akron want to watch a news show about the pollution of beaches in Miami? Thus the paradox: in trying to meet the requirement to take account of "local needs," the television industry stays pretty close to general themes, treated in a vague manner, dealing with no one and no place in particular.

And finally there are the journalists themselves. Here Epstein presents some of the most insightful research of the book, and it is here that his title takes on a special, ironic meaning. Television journalists tend to have similar backgrounds: they are usually lapsed Protestants from the middle west, with no ties to any organization or community outside their profession, and with no trace in their pasts of any political activity or, indeed, any political opinions at all. Although most correspondents identified themselves as being liberals, their liberalism was neither fervently held nor well-defined. Most importantly, perhaps, television correspondents said that they got most of their information from television; most of them admitted that they did not read much, or that they did not take their reading seriously, and relied on television in assessing "changes in the national mood." The overall impression the correspondents give is of men and women without roots, either in a place, a time, or a philosophy: "Most of the thirty-two correspondents I interviewed at length suggested in one way or another that they had severed their ties to the past when they moved to network news. . . . None still resides or claims to maintain any connection with the place where they grew up; most now own their own homes in the suburbs of New York City, Washington, D.C., or Los Angeles."

Do these people make TV what it is? Or are they in television because the business deliberately recruits such people? Epstein's evidence suggests the latter. In fact, the general conclusion to be drawn from *News From Nowhere* is that the television industry is affected very little by the people in it, and very much by the internal logic of its techniques and its economies.

Epstein does not have any plans for reforming television, and the message I read between the lines is that reform is simply not possible. The argument for televised news stands or falls on the usefulness of television as a means of public education, and visual images are simply very tricky things to rely on for such a purpose. Moving pictures are illusions; they show us very little while seeming to show a lot. Even live, unedited broadcasts, such as the Watergate hearings. though they convey impressions that the printed word would sometimes miss, are not so superior as a means of communication that they shore up the case for television as an educational vehicle.

For 25 years, with mounting intensity and despite the best efforts of all its experts, television has distorted, confused, and hidden the truth about public issues until Americans are apparently more anxious to watch soap operas than a Congressional investigation of their own government. For that preference, disturbing as it is, they may not be entirely to blame.



By John R. Fry

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REVIEWERS

DENNIS HALE is Book Editor of *Worldview*, a monthly publication of the Council on Religion and International Affairs in New York.

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In The Days of Simon Stern

ARTHUR A. COHEN

Random House, $8.95

Hunter and Hunted: Human History of the Holocaust

GERD KORMAN, EDIT.

Viking, $8.95

MICHAEL J. BANDLER

The Holocaust—and only one deserves to be capitalized—is now a part of world history—nearly three decades after the liberation of the concentration camps and the unleashing of the truth about the horrors that transpired. Six million, more or less, perished in that continental conflagration; but many thousands survived, or more appropriately, outlasted, endured. A vast number of the endurers have remained as silent as some who perished (just as many of the victims live today through their writings). Except for scattered paragraphs in broader-based novels, the epic of survival has remained virgin literary territory until now. The second half of the 1940's—aside even from the creation of the state of Israel—was a momentous era, simmering with hope for the remnant. Elie Wiesel remarked to a friend recently that he and others truly believed there was an opportunity for the Messiah to arrive in 1945, 1946 and 1947. It is of more than passing interest that philosopher-commentator Arthur A. Cohen—challenged by the mystery of the Holocaust itself and of God's role or presence during the onslaught—has focused his new novel on this theme.

The Jewish novel, too often, has been a frivolous art form, over-extended with stereotypes of benefit to no one—not even to those who fit the particular images. To say that the author has written *the* great Jewish novel of our age, however, would be a disservice to the Schwartz-Barts and Wiesels we have in our literary midst. Such writers as Bernard Malamud, Chaim Potok, Robert Kotlowitz and Saul Bellow, among others, have also proffered contributions that cannot be relegated to the mire of ordinary Jewish fiction.

So let us say of *In The Days Of Simon Stern* that it is a jewel to be treasured, a majestic work of fiction that should stand world literature's test of time, to be read and reread in a search for new meanings and interpretations. Its dual themes of destruction and survival through redemption are inexorably bound to our collective experiences—Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

To summarize this 464-page masterpiece is to assume an impossible task. Something is bound to be omitted, and whatever is omitted is none the less demanding of the reader's attention than that which will be cited. Blending ancient wisdom and mysticism, and the art of homiletics with excellent plot construction, Cohen chronicles the life and times of a messiah—not necessarily a false messiah, not *the* Messiah, but a messiah nonetheless.

"The messiah," he opines through the book's narrator, a blind scribe named Nathan Gaza, "is a real moment, never a psychological conceit. . . ."

> There are many times that need messiahs, but time skips over the moment, and the messiah, waiting ready in the shadows, does not appear. I have told you the story of a fulfilled moment. It is when God flees that we have tragedy. But it is as well the occasion when genius, risking the little that a man can share, holds back tragedy until God regains his courage and returns.

Years ago, a seer foretold to one Reb Abram that his future wife would give birth to a son who, years later, would inadvertently cause his parents' death; out of the ensuing grief, he would become a beacon to the nations. The boy is Simon Stern. His life progresses from stunted growth during childhood to an awareness of finances and a succession of lucrative endeavors, until he negotiates a series of major real estate ventures that ensures a lasting wealth for his family. But death indeed comes to his parents through his negligence—the sin of not paying attention against which Cohen remonstrates.

Until this juncture, the novel is virtually pure narrative, fanciful and entertaining. But with the arrival of a mysterious visitor who relates to Simon the awesome Legend of the Last Jew on Earth—a tale-within-a-tale to be pondered and discussed—a veil of mysticism descends on its pages. The riveting, stranger-than-fiction fable is followed by Simon's attendance at a public lecture by Dr. Chaim Weizmann in 1943, at which the cloistered millionaire learns of the conspiracy of silence among the nations with regard to events in Europe at that time. Simon seizes the moment and formulates a declaration of conscience that creates the Society for the Rescue and Resurrection of the Jews, supported by his tens of millions of dollars, peopled by hand-picked survivors of the Holocaust (a Mengele selection process in reverse), and housed in a fortress on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

But messiahs with small m's or capital M's court disaster and Simon

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Stern is no exception. The hows and whys are the stuff of the narrative, and for the reader alone to discover. But as the mythical community within the community of Israel is established—"an enclave in which to cultivate the resources of stubbornness," a Jewish Camelot, as it were—the themes of survival, endurance and ultimate redemption remain constant.

As Elie Wiesel has observed, "today we know that all roads and all words lead to the Holocaust. What it was we may never know; but we must proclaim at least, that it was, that it is." An obvious road to the Holocaust for interested students of history is a new anthology of writings on the human aspects of the devastation, selected and edited by Professor Gerd Korman. The latest in the fine B'nai Brith Jewish Heritage Classics series, *Hunter and Hunted* traces chronologically the steady movement from legal prosecution to physical torture and violence, and ultimately to death or—for the endurers—liberation.

It is a collection filled with agony. Mental and physical deterioration is evident: Nuremberg laws and similar regulations gave rise to informers; death in the camps led to cannibalism. Yet, in those underestimated pockets of resistance wtih their homemade Molotov cocktails can be found the resolute spirit of survival and hope for a better day of which Maimonides spoke in his Thirteen Principles of Faith, and which Chaim Kaplan inserted in his Warsaw diary, his "scroll of agony," as a light to the Simon Sterns he would never meet.

Was there actually a Simon Stern in the late 1940's in New York City, who sought to bind up the wounds and stop the continuous leakage of pure blood from his people? Perhaps, and perhaps not. But the moment was propitious.

At a symposium held six years ago on the Jewish festival of Purim—commemorated in the Book of Esther and marking redemption from the hands of a tyrant of yore—a group of philosophers and theologians confronted the catastrophe of a generation earlier. Acknowledging the 613 commandments incumbent upon Jews to heed, Emil Fackenheim offered a 614th:

> . . . we are first, commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. We are commanded, second, to remember in our very guts and bones the martyrs of the Holocaust, lest their memory perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair of God, however much we may have to contend with Him or with belief in Him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden, finally, to despair of the world as the place which is to become the kingdom of God, lest we help make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted. To abandon any of these imperatives, in response to Hitler's victory at Auschwitz, would be to hand him yet other, posthumous victories."

Simon Stern—so inexorably linked to Purim, survival and the hope inherent in redemption—would heartily approve.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 515)

from which we ". . . . come to understand the truth about Santore." (Mitrione.) This "truth," of course, is what Costa-Gravas makes it to be: Mitrione was a calculating, ruthless man, a torturer, an organizer of "death squads" to murder "democratic leaders."

Clearly Westerbeck sympathizes with Costa-Gravas' character assassination to the point where he totally ignores the responsibility of investigating the facts. In so doing he concurs in the slander and the propaganda. And I am old-fashioned enough to be sensitive to the immorality of "bearing false witness."

Three years ago a human being, Mr. Dan Mitrione, was murdered in cold blood. I have met his widow and children. Your reviewer owes them in common decency an apology; and if he was unaware of the clear meaning of the words he used, he owes a clarification to the readers of *Commonweal.*

(REV.) M. J. FARRELL

Correction

Two errors appeared in Michael Novak's column, "On Celibacy and Marriage—II," in the Aug. 24 *Commonweal.*

The second sentence of paragraph four, page 447, should have read: "The 'spoiled priest, 'the fallen virgin,' 'the adulterous spouse,' each is on the one hand attracted to the sacramental symbol of transcendence and on the other hand earthy, fleshly, alive to the beauties and the torments of sexual love."

On page 463, paragraph one: the sentence, "Some were skillful," should have read, "Some were faithful."

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